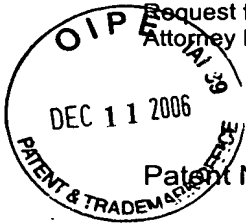


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EW

Patent No. 7,059,109  
Request for Reconsideration of Prior Art Document and  
Request for Certificate of Correction dated December 7, 2006  
Attorney Docket No.: 0388-031645



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Patent No. : 7,059,109 Confirmation No. 4587  
Inventors : Samejima et al.  
Issued : June 13, 2006  
Title : Mid-Mount Mower Having A Mower Unit Disposed  
Between A Front Wheel Unit And A Pair Of Right And  
Left Rear Wheels Arranged Rearwardly Of A Vehicle  
Body To Be Independently Shiftable  
Examiner : Alicia Torres Group Art Unit 3671  
Customer No. : 28289

**Certificate**  
DEC 14 2006  
**of Correction**

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF  
PRIOR ART DOCUMENT AND  
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION OF PATENT**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

ATTENTION: Decision and Certificate of Correction  
Branch of the Patent Issue Division

Sir:

In accordance with 35 U.S.C. §255, we attach hereto Form PTO/SB/44 and proof of error and request that a Certificate of Correction be issued in the above-identified patent. The following error appears in the patent as printed:

(1) Title Page, See Item 56, References Cited, insert the following:

-- FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

JP 2000-351330 12/19/2000 Kubota Corp. --

(See the Information Disclosure Statement mailed March 2, 2004 and initialed by the Examiner on November 18, 2004. See also the copy of the Abstract and partial translation of the JP '330 reference which have been enclosed for the Examiner's convenience. When returning Form PTO/SB/08A, the Examiner initialed the U.S. Patent Document, but failed to initial the Foreign Patent Document.)

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12/12/2006 SLUANG1 00000046 7059109

01 FC:1811

100.00 OP

{W0319890.1}

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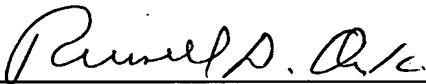
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Respectfully submitted,

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**UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION**

Page 1 of 1

PATENT NO. : 7,059,109  
APPLICATION NO. : 10/649,332  
ISSUE DATE : June 13, 2006  
INVENTORS : Samejima et al.

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Face of the Patent, See Item 56, References Cited, add the following:

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MAILING ADDRESS OF SENDER: The Webb Law Firm  
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436 Seventh Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1845

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PATENT APPLICATION  
Serial No. 10/649,332  
Atty. Docket No. 388-031645

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Group Art Unit 3671 : Confirmation No. 4587

In re Application of : MID-MOUNT MOWER HAVING A MOWER  
UNIT DISPOSED BETWEEN A FRONT WHEEL  
Kazuo SAMEJIMA et al. : UNIT AND A PAIR OF RIGHT AND LEFT REAR  
WHEELS ARRANGED REARWARDLY OF A  
Serial No. 10/649,332 : VEHICLE BODY TO BE INDEPENDENTLY  
SHIFTABLE  
Filed August 26, 2003 :  
Examiner-Not Yet Assigned :  
Customer No. : 28289

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

March 2, 2004

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Commissioner for Patents  
P. O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on March 2, 2004.

Kay E. Yetter  
(Name of Person Mailing Paper)

Signature

03/02/2004  
Date

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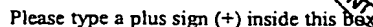
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Respectfully submitted,

WEBB ZIESENHEIM LOGSDON  
ORKIN & HANSON, P.C.

By

  
Alexander Detschelt  
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700 Koppers Building  
436 Seventh Avenue  
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Telephone: 412-471-8815  
Facsimile: 412-471-4094



PTO/SB/08A (08-00)

Approved for use through 10/31/2001. OMB 0651-0031

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it contains a valid OMB control number.

Substitute for form 1449A/PTO					
<b>INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT</b>  (use as many sheets as necessary)					
				Complete if Known	
				Application Number	10/649,332
				Filing Date	August 26, 2003
				First Named Inventor	Kazuo Samejima et al.
				Group Art Unit	3671
				Examiner Name	Not Yet Assigned
Attorney Docket Number	388-031645				
Sheet	1	Of	1		

[illegible][illegible]

Examiner Signature		Date Considered	
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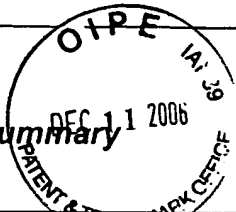
\*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

<sup>1</sup>Unique citation designation number. <sup>2</sup>See attached Kinds of U.S. Patent Documents. <sup>3</sup>Enter Office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). <sup>4</sup>For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. <sup>5</sup>Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST. 16 if possible. <sup>6</sup>Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.

**Burden Hour Statement:** This form is estimated to take 2.0 hours to complete. Time will vary depending upon the needs of the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you are required to complete this form should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, D.C. 20231.

{W0108592.1}

**Office Action Summary**



Application No.

10/649,332

Applicant(s)

SAMEJIMA ET AL.

Examiner

Alicia M Torres

Art Unit

3671

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 August 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4-6 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/4/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

PTO/SB/08A (08-00)  
Approved for use through 10/31/2001. OMB 0651-0031  
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				Filing Date	August 26, 2003
				First Named Inventor	Kazuo Samejima et al.
				Group Art Unit	3671
				Examiner Name	Not Yet Assigned
Sheet	1	Of	1	Attorney Docket Number	388-031645

[illegible][illegible]

Examiner Signature	<i>Alicia Lora</i>	Date Considered	11/18/07
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\*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

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{W0108592.1}



**RIDING TYPE LAWN MOWER**

Patent Number: JP2000351330  
Publication date: 2000-12-19  
Inventor(s): SAMEJIMA KAZUO; TOGOSHI YOSHIKAZU; DOBASHI HIRONORI; EZAKI YOSHIYUKI  
Applicant(s): KUBOTA CORP  
Requested Patent: ☐ JP2000351330  
Application Number: JP19990162513 19990609  
Priority Number(s):  
IPC Classification: B60K11/04; A01D34/64  
EC Classification:  
Equivalents:

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**Abstract**

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**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To improve the strength of collision resistance of a rear end part of a vehicle body at the time of turn and front and rear balance in riding type lawn mower of speed differential steering type in which the mower is arranged between a drive rear wheel and a follow-up steering front wheel and a transmission and an engine are arranged in front of and in the back of the rear wheel, respectively.

**SOLUTION:** HSTs 8 are mounted per a pair of left and right drive wheels 2, 2, a driver's seat is arranged on the front side of an engine 3, and a radiator 25 is arranged between the front and rear of the driver's seat and the engine 3. A guide plate for performing suction of an HST fan 48 from below the engine is provided below the radiator 25.

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Partial Translation of  
**Japanese Unexamined Patent Application Publication**  
**2000-351330**

Filed: June 9, 1999

Laid-Open: December 19, 2000

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Fig. 1] Side elevation of a riding lawn mower;

[Fig. 2] Plan view of the riding lawn mower;

[Fig. 3] Plan view showing a structure of the vehicle's lower region;

[Fig. 4] Front view showing a region including a transmission case and a driver's seat;

[Fig. 5] Side elevation partially cut away showing a structure of the vehicle's rearward region;

[Fig. 6] Enlarged side elevation of a primary portion illustrating a raising/lowering mechanism of a mower unit;

[Fig. 7] Side elevation showing a vehicle framework structure;  
and

[Fig. 8] Plan view showing the vehicle framework structure.

[0022]

[Embodiment of the Invention]

One embodiment of the present invention will be described hereinafter with reference to the drawings. Figs. 1 and 2 show a riding lawn mower having a mower unit mid-mounted at an underside of the vehicle body between a front wheel unit and a rear wheel unit. In the drawings, reference sign 1 denotes a pair of, right and left, dirigible front wheels; 2 - a pair of, right and left, driving rear wheels; 3 - an engine; 4 - a transmission case; 5 - a mower unit, 6 - a driver's seat; 7 - a link mechanism suspending the mower unit 5 for raising and lowering the same; and F - a vehicle framework. This lawn mower further includes HSTs (an example of a stepless change speed mechanism switchable between forward and rearward directions) 8, so that the two front wheels 1 are steered and driven based on a difference in speed between the two rear wheels 2.

[0023]

As shown in Figs. 7 and 8, the vehicle framework F includes a main framework "f" having a rear framework 11 for supporting the water-cooling diesel engine 3 and the transmissions case 4, and a forward framework 12 suspending the mower unit 5; and further includes an upper framework 13 connected integral with the main framework "f" for supporting the driver's seat 6. The rear framework 11 includes a pair of, right and left plate frames 9, 9; a rear-end cross frame 14 connecting these plate frames 9, 9 at respective rear ends

thereof; and an intermediate cross frame 15 connecting the plate frames 9, 9 at respective longitudinal intermediate positions thereof.

[0024]

The forward framework 12 includes a square pipe material 10 bent into a "U" open forward in plan view and welded to the plate frames 9, 9 at respective longitudinal front ends thereof; and a front end cross frame 16 interconnecting right and left front ends of the plate frames 9, 9. The upper framework 13 includes a pair of, right and left rear posts 18, 18 erected from the plate frames 9, 9 at respective positions adjacent, in a fore and aft direction, to a rear axle 17; a pair of, right and left front posts 19, 19 standing so as to ride over respective front ends of the plate frames 9, 9 and a rear end of the square pipe material 10; a pair of, right and left upper longitudinal frames 20, 20 interconnecting the rear posts 18, 18 and the front posts 19, 19, respectively; and, front and rear, upper cross frames 21, 22 each interconnecting these upper longitudinal frames 20, 20.

\*\*\*\*\*

MID-MOUNT MOWER HAVING A MOWER UNIT DISPOSED  
BETWEEN A FRONT WHEEL UNIT AND A PAIR OF RIGHT AND  
LEFT REAR WHEELS ARRANGED REARWARDLY OF A VEHICLE  
BODY TO BE INDEPENDENTLY SHIFTABLE

5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

10 This invention relates to a mid-mount mower having a mower unit  
mounted between a front wheel unit and a pair of right and left rear wheels  
arranged rearwardly of a vehicle body to be independently shiftable.

Description of the Related Art

- 15 A riding mid-mount mower, known from Japanese Unexamined Patent  
Application Publication 2000-351330, includes a body frame having a pair  
of right and left front longitudinal frames and a pair of right and left rear  
longitudinal frames. The front longitudinal frames support front wheels  
and suspend a mower unit through links. Each rear longitudinal frame is  
20 connected to a rear wheel drive section. The right and left front  
longitudinal frames are connected to each other through forward and  
rearward cross frames. The front longitudinal frames and the rear  
longitudinal frames are connected through the rearward cross frame.
- 25 A riding mower keeps a mower unit in a raised position during a  
non-operational run. When the mower runs over a rough terrain or rides  
over a curb, it is desirable to raise the mower unit to a higher position to  
avoid contact with the ground. In this type of mower, a gear case is  
protrusively mounted on a deck of the mower unit to convert torque  
30 transmitted in a longitudinal direction from a PTO shaft disposed in a rear

CJC

**COPY**

Patent No. 7,059,109  
Request for Reconsideration of Prior Art Document and  
Request for Certificate of Correction dated December 7, 2006  
Attorney Docket No.: 0388-031645

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Inventors : Samejima et al.  
Issued : June 13, 2006  
Title : Mid-Mount Mower Having A Mower Unit Disposed  
Between A Front Wheel Unit And A Pair Of Right And  
Left Rear Wheels Arranged Rearwardly Of A Vehicle  
Body To Be Independently Shiftable  
Examiner : Alicia Torres Group Art Unit 3671  
Customer No. : 28289

**Certificate**  
DEC 14 2006  
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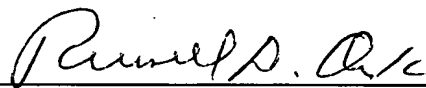
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Respectfully submitted,

THE WEBB LAW FIRM

By 

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Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Telephone: (412) 471-8815  
Facsimile: (412) 471-4094

**UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION**

Page 1 of 1

PATENT NO. : 7,059,109  
APPLICATION NO. : 10/649,332  
ISSUE DATE : June 13, 2006  
INVENTORS : Samejima et al.

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Serial No. 10/649,332  
Atty. Docket No. 388-031645

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In re Application of : MID-MOUNT MOWER HAVING A MOWER  
UNIT DISPOSED BETWEEN A FRONT WHEEL  
Kazuo SAMEJIMA et al. : UNIT AND A PAIR OF RIGHT AND LEFT REAR  
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SHIFTABLE  
Filed August 26, 2003 :  
Examiner-Not Yet Assigned :  
Customer No. : 28289

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
March 2, 2004

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Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Kay E. Yetter  
(Name of Person Mailing Paper)

Signature

03/02/2004  
Date

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WEBB ZIESENHEIM LOGSDON  
ORKIN & HANSON, P.C.

By



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Substitute for form 1449A/PTO					
<b>INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT</b>  (use as many sheets as necessary)				Complete if Known	
				Application Number	10/649,332
				Filing Date	August 26, 2003
				First Named Inventor	Kazuo Samejima et al.
				Group Art Unit	3671
				Examiner Name	Not Yet Assigned
Sheet	1	Of	1	Attorney Docket Number	388-031645

[illegible][illegible]

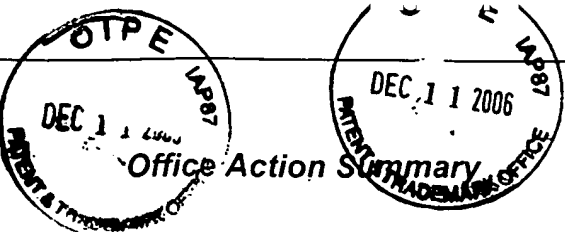
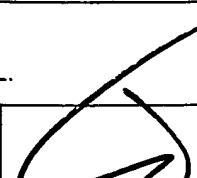
Examiner Signature		Date Considered	
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\*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

<sup>1</sup>Unique citation designation number. <sup>2</sup>See attached Kinds of U.S. Patent Documents. <sup>3</sup>Enter Office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). <sup>4</sup>For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. <sup>5</sup>Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST. 16 if possible. <sup>6</sup>Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.

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{W0108592.1}

	Application No. 10/649,332	Applicant(s) SAMEJIMA ET AL.	
	Examiner Alicia M Torres	Art Unit 3671	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 August 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4-6 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/4/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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				Attorney Docket Number	388-031645
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[illegible][illegible]

Examiner Signature	<i>William A. Brown</i>	Date Considered	11/13/64
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{W0108592.1}

DEC 11 2006

**RIDING TYPE LAWN MOWER**

Patent Number: JP2000351330  
Publication date: 2000-12-19  
Inventor(s): SAMEJIMA KAZUO; TOGOSHI YOSHIKAZU; DOBASHI HIRONORI; EZAKI YOSHIYUKI  
Applicant(s): KUBOTA CORP  
Requested Patent: ☐ JP2000351330  
Application Number: JP19990162513 19990609  
Priority Number(s):  
IPC Classification: B60K11/04; A01D34/64  
EC Classification:  
Equivalents:

**Abstract**

**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To improve the strength of collision resistance of a rear end part of a vehicle body at the time of turn and front and rear balance in riding type lawn mower of speed differential steering type in which the mower is arranged between a drive rear wheel and a follow-up steering front wheel and a trans mission and an engine are arranged in front of and in the back of the rear wheel, respectively.

**SOLUTION:** HSTs 8 are mounted per a pair of left and right drive wheels 2, 2, a driver's seat is arranged on the front side of an engine 3, and a radiator 25 is arranged between the front and rear of the driver's seat and the engine 3. A guide plate for performing suction of an HST fan 48 from below the engine is provided below the radiator 25.

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Partial Translation of  
**Japanese Unexamined Patent Application Publication**

**2000-351330**

Filed: June 9, 1999

Laid-Open: December 19, 2000

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Fig. 1] Side elevation of a riding lawn mower;

[Fig. 2] Plan view of the riding lawn mower;

[Fig. 3] Plan view showing a structure of the vehicle's lower region;

[Fig. 4] Front view showing a region including a transmission case and a driver's seat;

[Fig. 5] Side elevation partially cut away showing a structure of the vehicle's rearward region;

[Fig. 6] Enlarged side elevation of a primary portion illustrating a raising/lowering mechanism of a mower unit;

[Fig. 7] Side elevation showing a vehicle framework structure;  
and

[Fig. 8] Plan view showing the vehicle framework structure.

[0022]

[Embodiment of the Invention]

One embodiment of the present invention will be described hereinafter with reference to the drawings. Figs. 1 and 2 show a riding lawn mower having a mower unit mid-mounted at an underside of the vehicle body between a front wheel unit and a rear wheel unit. In the drawings, reference sign 1 denotes a pair of, right and left, dirigible front wheels; 2 - a pair of, right and left, driving rear wheels; 3 - an engine; 4 - a transmission case; 5 - a mower unit, 6 - a driver's seat; 7 - a link mechanism suspending the mower unit 5 for raising and lowering the same; and F - a vehicle framework. This lawn mower further includes HSTs (an example of a stepless change speed mechanism switchable between forward and rearward directions) 8, so that the two front wheels 1 are steered and driven based on a difference in speed between the two rear wheels 2.

[0023]

As shown in Figs. 7 and 8, the vehicle framework F includes a main framework "f" having a rear framework 11 for supporting the water-cooling diesel engine 3 and the transmissions case 4, and a forward framework 12 suspending the mower unit 5; and further includes an upper framework 13 connected integral with the main framework "f" for supporting the driver's seat 6. The rear framework 11 includes a pair of, right and left plate frames 9, 9; a rear-end cross frame 14 connecting these plate frames 9, 9 at respective rear ends



thereof; and an intermediate cross frame 15 connecting the plate frames 9, 9 at respective longitudinal intermediate positions thereof.

[0024]

The forward framework 12 includes a square pipe material 10 bent into a "U" open forward in plan view and welded to the plate frames 9, 9 at respective longitudinal front ends thereof; and a front end cross frame 16 interconnecting right and left front ends of the plate frames 9, 9. The upper framework 13 includes a pair of, right and left rear posts 18, 18 erected from the plate frames 9, 9 at respective positions adjacent, in a fore and aft direction, to a rear axle 17; a pair of, right and left front posts 19, 19 standing so as to ride over respective front ends of the plate frames 9, 9 and a rear end of the square pipe material 10; a pair of, right and left upper longitudinal frames 20, 20 interconnecting the rear posts 18, 18 and the front posts 19, 19, respectively; and, front and rear, upper cross frames 21, 22 each interconnecting these upper longitudinal frames 20, 20.

\*\*\*\*\*

MID-MOUNT MOWER HAVING A MOWER UNIT DISPOSED  
BETWEEN A FRONT WHEEL UNIT AND A PAIR OF RIGHT AND  
LEFT REAR WHEELS ARRANGED REARWARDLY OF A VEHICLE  
BODY TO BE INDEPENDENTLY SHIFTABLE

5

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### Field of the Invention

10 This invention relates to a mid-mount mower having a mower unit  
mounted between a front wheel unit and a pair of right and left rear wheels  
arranged rearwardly of a vehicle body to be independently shiftable.

### Description of the Related Art

15 A riding mid-mount mower, known from Japanese Unexamined Patent  
Application Publication 2000-351330, includes a body frame having a pair  
of right and left front longitudinal frames and a pair of right and left rear  
longitudinal frames. The front longitudinal frames support front wheels  
and suspend a mower unit through links. Each rear longitudinal frame is  
20 connected to a rear wheel drive section. The right and left front  
longitudinal frames are connected to each other through forward and  
rearward cross frames. The front longitudinal frames and the rear  
longitudinal frames are connected through the rearward cross frame.

25 A riding mower keeps a mower unit in a raised position during a  
non-operational run. When the mower runs over a rough terrain or rides  
over a curb, it is desirable to raise the mower unit to a higher position to  
avoid contact with the ground. In this type of mower, a gear case is  
protrusively mounted on a deck of the mower unit to convert torque  
30 transmitted in a longitudinal direction from a PTO shaft disposed in a rear